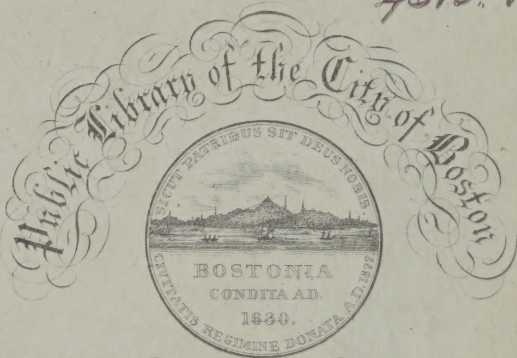




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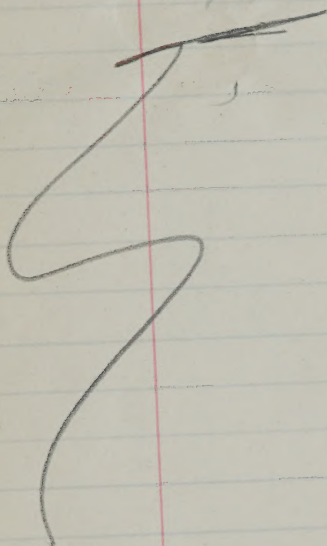
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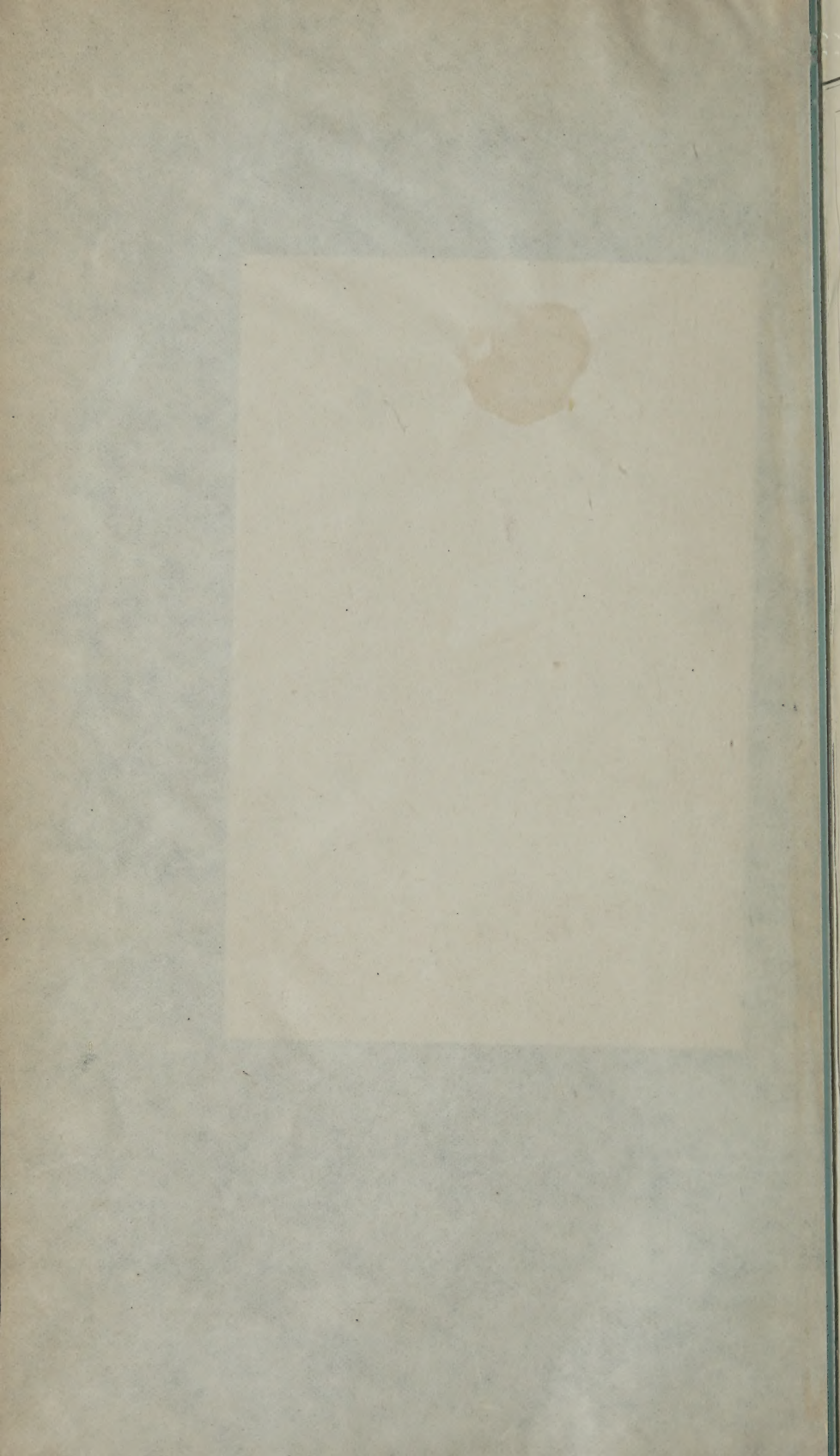


By *George Homer, Esq.*
Received *May 21, 1861. No 2638*

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Consecration of the Flag of the Union.



True to our Revolutionary Principles.

OLD SOUTH MEETING-HOUSE,

MAY 1, 1861.

EXERCISES

AT A

Consecration of the Flag of the Union,

BY THE

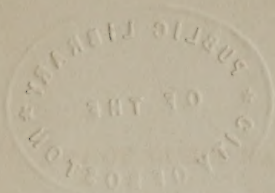
OLD SOUTH SOCIETY IN BOSTON,

MAY 1st, 1861.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ALFRED MUDGE & SON, 34 SCHOOL STREET:

1861.



Standing Committee of the Old South Society in Boston.

ZACHARIAH JELLISON,
GEORGE HOMER,
JABEZ C. HOWE,
INCREASE S. WITHINGTON,
CHARLES BLAKE,

SIMON G. CHEEVER,
JOSHUA B. KIMBALL,
SAMUEL COVERLY,
SAMUEL JOHNSON, JR.

Pastors.

REV. GEORGE W. BLAGDEN, D. D.
REV. JACOB M. MANNING.

Officers of the Church.

PLINY CUTTER,
CHARLES STODDARD,

LORING LOTHROP,
HENRY H. JONES.

AS HE WAS TO OUR FATHERS, SO MAY GOD BE TO US.

IN this day of disaster and disruption, when national harmony is disturbed, when the beautiful order of the Republic is broken up, and the dearest interests of ourselves and our posterity are in peril, the Standing Committee of the Old South Society, with the Pastors and Officers of the Church, have deemed it eminently proper for them to unite with their fellow citizens, in expressions of loyalty to the Government, in its efforts to restore order, peace, and justice throughout the land.

The Old South has a store of national recollections. It is associated with many memorable events in our Revolutionary history, and has been called the "Sanctuary of Freedom." These recollections and associations are treasured as a noble inheritance. They bestow an influence which no other riches can supply; for they cherish the spirit of the fathers, and prompt their children to love and defend the institutions, which life and fortune were given to establish.

Thus true to the memories of the past, and devoted to the Country, whose glory must not pass away, the Old South to-day gives our National Flag to the breeze—bearing upon it the motto, "True to our Revolutionary Principles"—and declares to the world, that good men will cheerfully put themselves forward to protect it.

Boston, May 1, 1861.

EXERCISES.

THE following notice was published in the morning papers on Wednesday, May 1st, 1861:

NOTICE.

Our National Flag will be given to the breeze to-day, at 12 o'clock, from the Old South Meetinghouse.

After introductory remarks by George Homer, Esq., of the Standing Committee, Prayer will be offered by the Rev. Dr. Blagden, and Addresses by the Rev. J. M. Manning, Rev. Dr. Blagden, and others.

In accordance with the above notice, a Flag was thrown to the breeze, from the tower of the Old South Meetinghouse. A large collection of people witnessed the exercises. The windows of the Church, and of the neighboring buildings, were filled with ladies. A platform overlooking the street, had been erected within the enclosure belonging to the Society, and was occupied by the Standing Committee of the Society and the Pastors and Officers of the Church.

Gilmore's Band, stationed near the platform, just before noon, gave "Hail Columbia," as introductory to the ceremonies. This was followed by "Washington's March."

Thousands, eager and enthusiastic, having assembled, completely filled the yard and streets at 12 o'clock, when George Homer, Esq., of the Standing Committee, addressed the vast assembly as follows:

ADDRESS OF GEORGE HOMER, ESQ.

Friends and Fellow Citizens: The Standing Committee of the Old South Society, mindful of their responsibilities as citizens of Boston, and of their connection with this historic and venerable Church, have met here to-day with their Pastors and friends, to perform an important ceremony.

We are about to throw to the breeze from yonder spire, the dear old flag of our fathers, and to consecrate it with our prayers.

In this sad crisis of our nation's history, when treason and rebellion are abroad in our land, it has occurred to all of us connected with this Society, that the banner of our fathers should float from this renowned building. Where better than here should the national emblem be displayed? Where better than on this consecrated spot should the flag of our Republic be seen and read of all men? It has a glorious history, of which we should all be proud. It is still honored throughout the whole world. To our fathers it was a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and by *this* sign they conquered.

It seems to me, gentlemen, that the stability of our government is now, for the first time since its existence, actually on trial. The jury are all the true and loyal citizens of the Free States, and their verdict we shall soon know. For one, I feel a sure conviction what this verdict will be. The universal uprising of the people of all the loyal States, without regard to former party ties, fore-

shadows the result. It is no sectional or party question. To me it rises infinitely above party or section. It is simply a question of government or no government; of law and order, or of anarchy and revolution. In a word, so far as republican institutions are concerned, it is a question of life or death. There is no neutral ground for us to stand upon. Those not for us are against us. Choose you this day whom you will serve.

In this great contest between right and wrong, with the whole civilized world looking on as anxious spectators, where shall the people of this glorious old city of Boston stand, but foremost in defence of liberty and law? If those of us, especially, who have long worshipped in this old "Sanctuary of Freedom," falter or prove disloyal, these massive walls would fall upon and crush us, and the bell above our heads, ring out in indignant tones our everlasting infamy.

Let us try to catch something of the inspiration which the spot on which we stand, and the scenes which surround us, naturally awaken. Let us remember, also, the solemn and momentous issues at stake in this contest.

If the great problem of man's capacity for self-government fails here, where in the providence of God shall we look to see it more successfully carried out? If it fails here, in this age of Christian civilization, then all the toils and sacrifices, and the precious blood of our heroic Revolutionary Fathers will have been spent in vain. Our weary eyes cannot look elsewhere for the solution of the stupendous problem which has baffled all the philosophy and wisdom of preceding ages.

But, gentlemen, it will *not* fail. God reigns. Out of confusion He will bring order, and make even the wrath of man praise Him. Washington, I seem to see in the clear sky above us. I accept the omen and will abide the issue.

In the dark and stormy times of our Revolutionary history, it was within the consecrated walls of this Old South Church, that our patriotic fathers were accustomed to assemble and take counsel together. Here Warren, and Hancock, and the Adamses, and their associates, met and poured out their indignant protest against British oppression. Here, within a few feet of where we stand, Benjamin Franklin was born. Let us, then, in view of the memories of the past, and in hope and faith for the future, but above all, relying upon the favor of Heaven, reverently throw our national flag to the breeze, and invoke upon it the blessing of Almighty God.

Mr. Homer then requested his fellow citizens to unite with the Rev. Dr. Blagden, in imploring the divine blessing. The whole assembly remained uncovered and in profound silence, while the Rev. Dr. Blagden offered the following prayer:

PRAYER.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we pray for those states of mind, which shall honor Thee, and be acceptable to Thee, as we do the act which we have met, we trust in Thy fear, to perform. We bless Thee, in our trials,—for the united love of country, with which we now spread out its

banner to the wind. Oh, let Thy blessing rest on that country, accordingly as we, its inhabitants, hope in Thee. Thou God of our fathers, Thou God of their children, Thou Saviour of men, bless us in this crisis of our land!

Bless Thy servant, the President of our Union, and those immediately connected with him in the administration of our government. Be with them in those solemn moments, when the lives and the happiness of multitudes may hang on their decisions. Render them firm and energetic in action. We pray that the spirit of the gospel of Christ may prevail in all the acts of the government; and that Thy grace may preserve us a united people, under the constitution through which we have acquired and enjoyed so much.

O Lord, if this question must be settled by the shedding of blood, go with our hosts in action. Yet, if it be Thy will, so guide the minds of our erring countrymen, that this issue may be avoided. But, if Thou hast otherwise determined, grant that we, who sustain the government and the laws of the country, may be united, and be blessed, and be made successful by Thee.

We pray for Thy blessings in each other form of service in which we shall engage at this time. Set a guard on our lips, that we offend not with the tongue. In Thy fear may we speak, and in Thy fear may we hear. May all the services be begun, continued, and ended in Thy fear; and be accompanied and followed by Thy blessing.

O Lord, hear our united prayer for those who have gone forth to bear the arms of the country in its service. Bless

the sons who have gone from their parents; the brothers, who have gone from their sisters; the relatives and companions, who have been called to part from relatives and friends. Guard them in the hour of danger. Bless them in regard to health, as well as in regard to duty. May prayers for them arise from every family altar. O, do Thou, the God of our fathers, be with us, accordingly as we hope in Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

At the conclusion of the prayer the Flag was unfurled, amid the cheers of the crowd. The Band saluted it, playing the "Star Spangled Banner."

The Rev. J. M. Manning, Associate Pastor, was next presented to the vast concourse, by Mr. Homer, and spoke as follows:

ADDRESS OF REV. J. M. MANNING.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, from the bottom of my heart,—and in the name of the Christian religion, I thank you—for unfurling that Flag where it now greets our eyes. It is in the right place. Let it roll out its colors to the sunlight, and play with the free breezes of Heaven, till its insulted honor has been vindicated,—till its supremacy is owned throughout the Republic, and every American knee bows to it in willing and joyous homage; then, an honorable peace having been secured, let it be folded up carefully, and laid among our historic treasures, to be transmitted, with glorious memories of these times, to our children's children.

If rumor be true, you have performed a bold and dangerous act, in throwing that banner upon the air. While the British troops held Boston, they destroyed the steeple

of the West Church for the crime of displaying the American ensign! and when the flag of secession waves from the top of Faneuil Hall, you must expect that the doings of this hour will invite chastisement—that the steeple of the Old South Church, for having dared to become a flag-staff, will be toppled to the ground. God's temple welcomes the Star Spangled Banner to-day,—for that banner has ceased to be the sign of corrupt fellowship, or of subserviency to wrong, and has become the symbol of justice and loyalty to human rights. There floats the ensign of the free. We hail it with patriotic shouts, for it signals to us divine order and the brotherhood of men.

Those stripes of crimson and pearl, and that constellation on its field of blue, are thrilling twenty millions of hearts while I speak. From the valleys of the Pine Tree State, from the homes of Stark and Allen, and Putnam, and Greene, from the mighty empires of the Middle States, from boundless prairie, and forest and mine, they issue forth, together with you of this peerless commonwealth, an innumerable and invincible host, to bear our national emblem whithersoever duty shall lead the way. All that beautifies and blesses American society, asks to sit in the shadow of the dear old flag; only that which is hateful and destructive would drag it from the sky, and rend and trample it.

The African, out of his ages of bondage, is peering, with a strange thrill of joy, at these stars and stripes; to him they are an auroral vision,—the early twilight, with its streak of flame, telling him that the day of redemption draweth nigh. Into this shadow flock those who would honor the mighty past, and secure a mightier future. Hither

come loyalty, order, goodness, civilization, the arts, philanthropy. And now, Christianity, divine mistress of the earth, bids her temples bear up this glorious ensign, as if to consecrate it to its new and holy mission, and thus signify what banner it is, which she will entwine with her own, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord.

And as it is befitting that Christianity should embrace the American ensign to-day, so it seems hardly less proper that the Old South of all the churches in New England, should be delegated for this touching ceremonial. She is not the oldest, but certainly the most historic of them all. The history of the nation cannot be disconnected from hers; the two are inseparably intertwined. Within a few yards of us, John Winthrop lived and died; and his mansion was occupied by ministers of this Church, until destroyed during the War of the Revolution. From his family these grounds passed into the possession of John Norton, the celebrated divine; and by him they were given to the Church, for the twofold object of civil and religious liberty.

The State House and this Sanctuary have been called the Moses and Aaron of New England freemen. Here the citizens of Boston, after the tragedy of March 5, 1770, met to denounce standing armies, and to demand the removal of the English troops,—a meeting which grew to an annual custom, under the direction of the selectmen, and which was really the origin of our present municipal observance of the Fourth of July. Echoes of the eloquence of Samuel Adams, Otis and Hancock, sleep within these walls,—eloquence which gave birth to the American Republic, and which,

beneath these starry folds, stirs us as it did our fathers with patriotic emotions.

Hither Warren came, and climbed through *that* window into the pulpit, on that memorable day, when no other citizen dared address the people—when none but those who loved liberty more than life, ventured to be his auditors—who sat in the pews, pale as dead men, while the King's troops, fully armed, thronged the aisles and pulpit steps. This building has served as an exercise-ground for horsemen, who sought to conquer the immortal emblem above us. The horse and his rider have perished, while the temple they profaned still stands, and the flag they hated still waves on high! SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS: thus may it ever be; and thus, by the help of Heaven, shall it be, with those who are bidding their *rattlesnake* fetch down our *eagle* from his home in the skies.

The sanctuary, which gave its sacred water to the brow of Franklin, this day dedicates and baptizes, in the name of the triune God, the symbol which that matchless diplomatist lured from the unwilling hands of kings, and which he taught the nations to fear and admire. We welcome thee back to thy natal spot,—to the puritan church of which thou wert born,—flag of the free! Float on forever, in majesty and might, thou glorious ensign—symbol of liberty, guardian of order and law, a nation's pride,—thou joy-speaking herald to the oppressed of all lands! Within thy folds may no crime or dishonor lurk; palsied be the tongue that would defame thee, withered the hand that would tear thee from thy lofty height! God go with thee in the day of battle, and, victory make thy standard her

abiding place! Under thy broad protection will we rally, in the days of peril; and whether the danger come from afar, or from internal foes, our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor shall be thine; and our children, brought devoutly to the altar of Freedom, shall be sworn to defend thee until the reign of the Prince of Peace begins!

Mr. Manning's remarks were frequently interrupted by hearty applause, and nine cheers were given for the speaker after he had concluded.

Mr. Homer then said, "Fellow Citizens, I take great pleasure in presenting to you the Rev. Dr. Blagden, of the Old South, whom you have known and respected for many years."

The Rev. Dr. Blagden spoke as follows:

REMARKS OF REV. DR. BLAGDEN.

Pointing to the flag, he said:

"'Tis the star-spangled banner: Oh! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!"

We are as one man to-day. What is more,—we are united in eternal truth: For we meet to sustain just government. The powers that be are ordained of God. "The magistrate beareth not the sword in vain." This truth is mighty, and will prevail. The flag we have raised is an emblem of it, and of a free government, from which men cannot secede, but by rebellion. And,—

"Where is the foe, but falls before us,—
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us!"

They who have left us, did not appreciate the blessings and the protection they, with their property, enjoyed under our Constitution. We may say of them, that they went out from us, but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. They have made a great mistake. The device on their banner has been alluded to, as being a rattlesnake. By a very natural association, it made me think of the words: "On thy belly shalt thou go, and *dust* shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

As we look at our flag, we see that the stripes signify the old thirteen States; and the stars, on the field of blue are emblems of them, and the many which have been added since. Some of those indicated by the stripes, have gone; and some of the stars have fallen. But we still have, in our happy Union, many more than the original thirteen. And of the character of the people who compose them, you, who are before me, are an illustration. They are a people, intelligent, moral, free! Standing as I do, here, by the side of this House of God, in which a well-known system of religious truth has been preached from its foundation, to the present day, I ought to say, and I appeal to you, who have known me, to free me from the charge of being sectarian, in any bad sense, when I say that the great masses of the people now represented by that flag, believe essentially in the religion of the puritans. They recognize the existence and attributes of a Sovereign God, in whose hands is the king's heart, so

that He turneth it as the rivers of water are turned; and, in doing so, they believe in those religious doctrines which have been identified with the cause, and the march of religious and civil liberty, in all times, and in all parts of the world.

My friend, who spoke before me, has said that the land on which the house stands, was given by the Rev. John Norton. That is true, in a certain sense. It would have been more entirely correct to say, that it was given by his widow. And I mention the fact that we may duly honor woman; and remember the widows, the mothers, the sisters, of our land, to-day, who around multitudes of household hearths, are busily and affectionately plying the needle, to insure the comfort of our young men, who have gone forth, if it shall be needful, to battle. We will ever remember,—we can never forget,—our indebtedness, as patriots, to woman.

My friends, I repeat, we are one. We have the same great object, the same principles, the same feelings, and in the love of our country, we will do the same acts.

Dr. Blagden's address excited much enthusiasm, and he received nine cheers at its close. The meeting broke up with nine cheers for the flag, and three cheers for the Standing Committee of the Old South Society.

